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NME

RAG'N'BONE MAN

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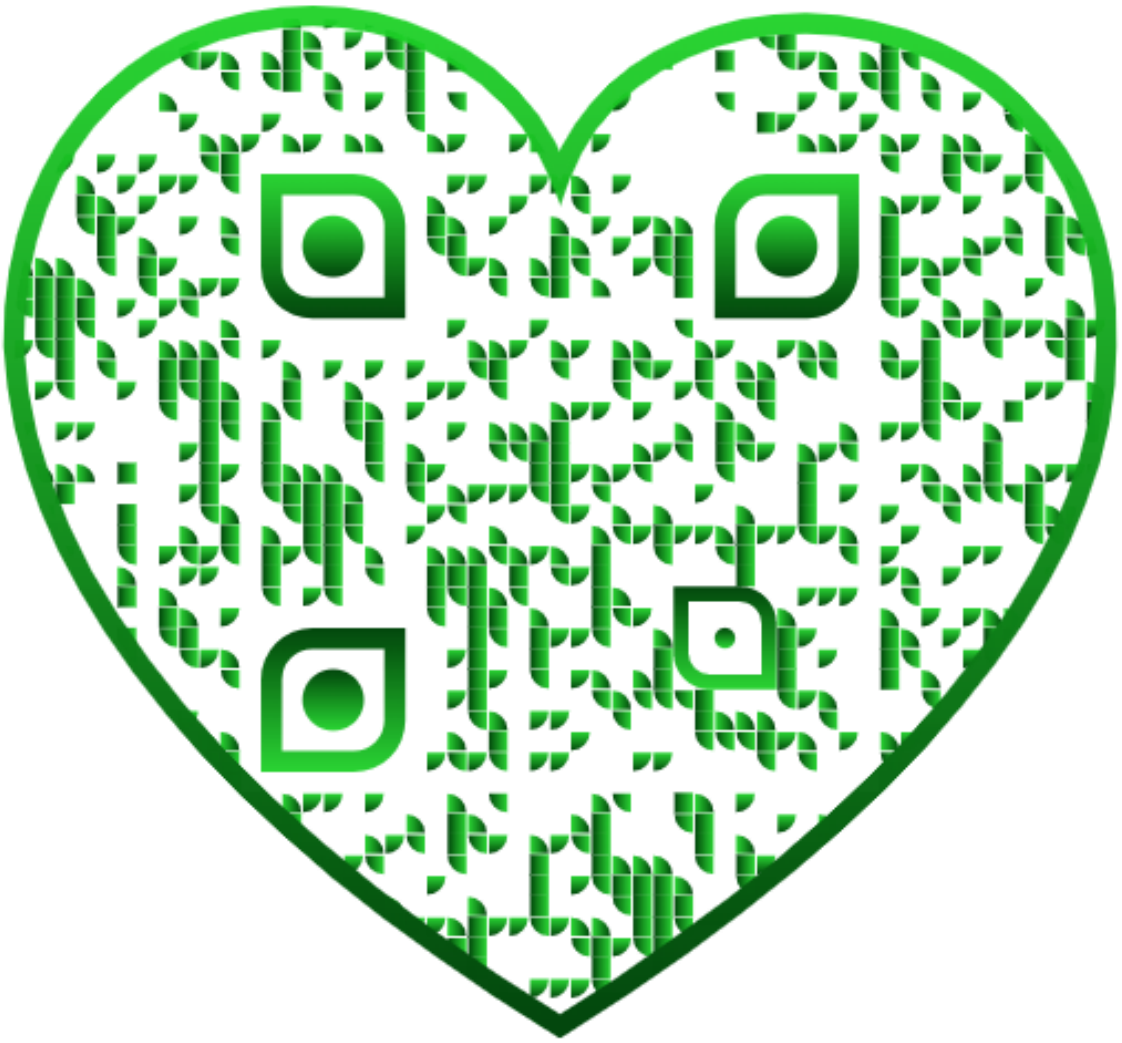

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NME

Hello...

RORY GRAHAM – or Rag'n'Bone Man, as he's better known – is the kind of performer the UK's music scene was built upon: self-made, self-styled and extremely bloody talented. Having honed his craft in pirate radio, open mics and hip-hop nights before putting that bluesy voice to work, he's an artist who – as he admits in his cover feature – is not easy to fit in a box. He's also a humble dude, as *NME*'s Hamish MacBain found when he joined him in his hometown of Brighton.

Two more Brits destined for greatness in this week's mag are south London's Sampha and Yorkshire teenager Billie Marten, both of them proving that the UK's new music scene is more vibrant than ever. We're also proud to announce the recipients of the VO5 NME Awards 2017's highest honour – the Godlike Genius gong – which this year goes to the iconic, excellent and all-round amazing Pet Shop Boys. Roll on February 15, where they'll be closing the ceremony with their typical panache and huge tunes. Here's hoping for 'Go West'...

MIKE WILLIAMS
Editor-in-Chief
@itsmikelike

Billie Marten p30

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COVER PHOTO: PEROU. CONTENTS PHOTO: MARK SHERWOOD

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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK

Love trumps hate

Stars of the music and entertainment world joined thousands on the streets to protest Donald Trump's 'Muslim ban' and state visit

ON MONDAY, THOUSANDS took to the streets of cities across the UK in protest against Donald Trump, his travel ban on citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries and his forthcoming state visit to the UK.

In the masses outside No 10 Downing Street in London, Slaves' Isaac Holman (pictured), Lily Allen, The 1975's Matty Healy, Bastille's Dan Smith and *Match Of The Day* presenter Gary Lineker voiced their anger, while members of the public brandished ingenious signs, including one (mis)quoting grime artist JME ("Act like a wasteman / That's just May").

Holman told *NME*: "The protest gave us the opportunity to display our discontent and stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters across the pond. Just because she [Theresa May] isn't speaking out, it doesn't mean we can't. It was inspirational."

The spirit of resistance was mirrored in the US, too: Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello joined Public Enemy's Chuck D at an LAX airport protest, while the Screen Actors Guild Awards was defined by pointedly political speeches. Best of all was *Stranger Things* star David Harbour's declaration that, "We will get past the lies, we will hunt monsters."

PHOTO: JORDAN HUGHES

Slaves' Isaac Holman protests in Westminster, January 30

VO5 NME AWARDS 2017

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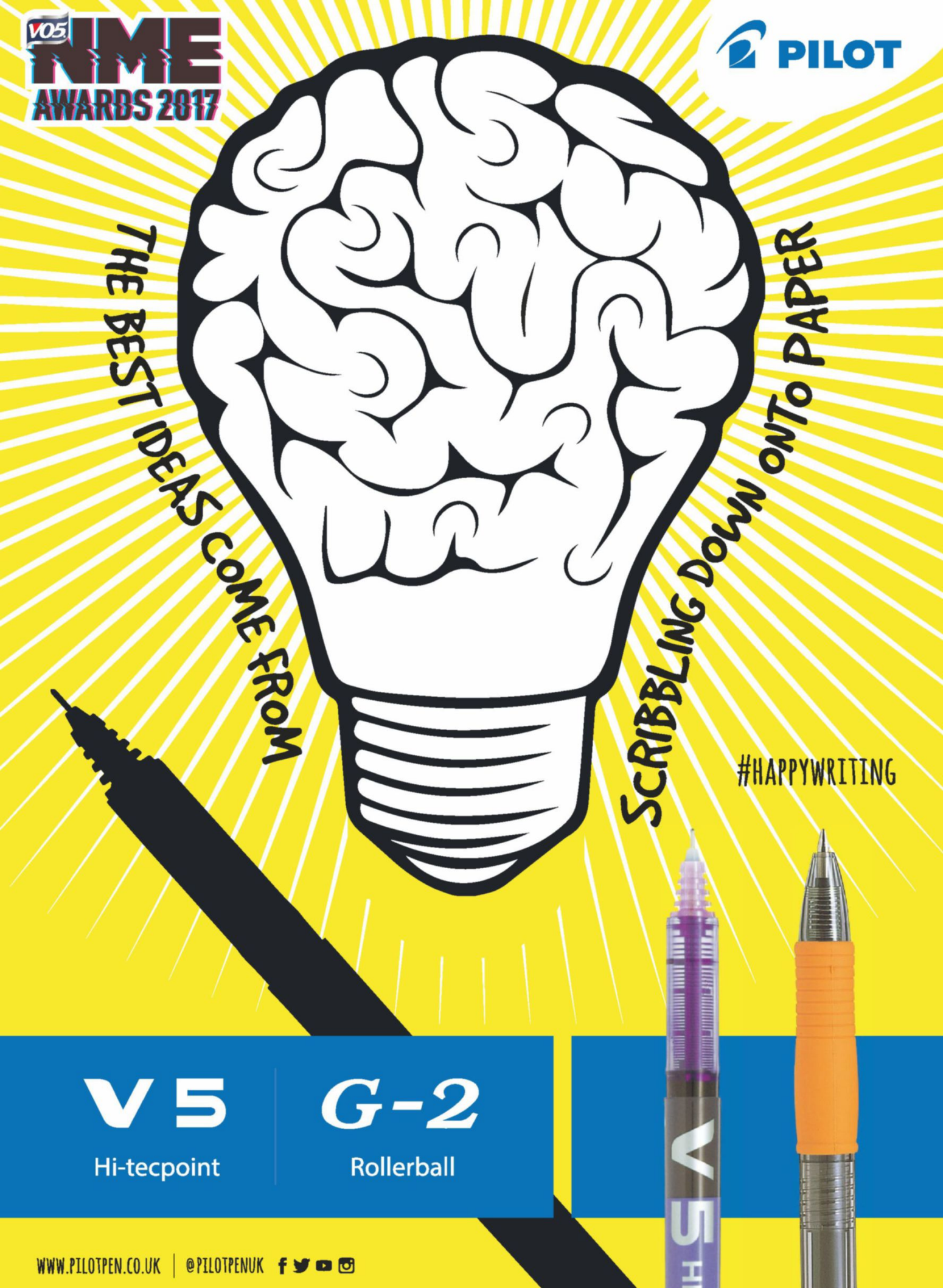

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Siri-ously good

Boy gets an iPhone lodged in his brain, becomes a superhero. Here's actor Bill Milner on *iBoy*, the weirdest new Netflix film

WORDS: JORDAN BASSETT. PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES

YOU AND YOUR smartphone are probably on close terms. But that's nothing compared to *iBoy* – the new Netflix movie starring Bill Milner and *Game Of Thrones* star Maisie Williams. Based on the 2010 novel by Kevin Brooks, it tells the tale of Tom (Milner), a London schoolboy who's shot after finding attackers sexually assaulting his friend Lucy (Williams). Pieces of a shattered iPhone get lodged in his brain and give him a sort of Apple upgrade, allowing him to intercept messages and phone calls. We had a chat with Bill to talk tech and terror.

So, the concept for *iBoy* is fairly *out there*...

"There are some quite crazy and ridiculous elements to the story, but then it is grounded in reality. I think that's what the audience will like – they might see their own stories. What I love about it isn't necessarily the sci-fi, it's the characters and how they relate."

We heard you were involved with writing the script...

"Yeah, [director] Adam Randall was really interested in the cast's opinions. He wanted younger voices in there. Maisie spoke a lot about our approach to the sexual assault scene – we needed to use the word 'rape', rather than step around it. There were a few drafts of the script that said 'attack', which does a disservice to people that have been through that."

iBoy co-stars Maisie Williams

Maisie Williams is, notoriously, cool as fk. Was she a right laugh during filming?**

"She's one of my best mates now! I was staying with my brother in Hackney and she was in an Airbnb round the corner. Living and filming in Hackney was such fun – there are great pubs everywhere. Maisie got recognised quite a lot when we went out, but she just takes it in her stride."

Do you see *iBoy* as a *Black Mirror*-style comment on our relationship with technology?

"People have compared it to *Black Mirror*, but they're cautionary tales, whereas our film embraces technology and sees it in a positive light. If there's a cautionary tale in *iBoy*, it's that if you have power, you have to go after what you want, but you shouldn't jeopardise your friendships."

***iBoy* is on Netflix now**

"There are some crazy elements to *iBoy*"

AGENDA

GOOD WEEK

WINONA RYDER
Went viral after pulling a bunch of weird faces when *Stranger Things* won at the SAG Awards. Winona forever!

CHANCE THE RAPPER
Teamed up with Ziggy Marley to cover his theme for kids show *Arthur*, restoring our faith in humanity.

RIHANNA
Azealia Banks tweeted the singer's (alleged) phone number during a Twitter spat. It's now disconnected.

BAD WEEK

SHIA LABEOUF
Charged with misdemeanor assault and harassment after punching a neo-Nazi at his performance art protest.

MIND THE BATS.

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Absolutely Godlike

VO5 NME AWARDS 2017

Pop heroes Pet Shop Boys will pick up the Godlike Genius Award at the VO5 NME Awards 2017

WITH JUST TWO WEEKS until the big event, we can confirm that Pet Shop Boys are the recipients of the Godlike Genius Award at the VO5 NME Awards 2017.

The synthpop heroes will collect the trophy at the ceremony, which takes place at London's O2 Academy Brixton on February 15. Previous Godlike Genius recipients include U2, Manic Street Preachers, Blondie and last year's winners Coldplay.

The award recognises and rewards their hugely successful and influential career, during which they've consistently produced some of the most ambitious, intelligent and bold pop music around.

"We're really happy to win *NME*'s Godlike Genius Award and we're looking forward to playing at the awards show," said Pet Shop Boys.

Since meeting in an electronics shop in Chelsea in 1981, Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe have released 13 Top 10 studio albums and 22 Top 10 singles, including 'West End Girls', 'Always On My Mind' and 'Go West'. They've collaborated with and influenced an array of music's biggest stars, such as David Bowie, Madonna, Lady Gaga and Daft Punk.

The band will close the ceremony with a performance including tracks from throughout their 36-year career.

They join previously announced performers Bastille, Dua Lipa and Wiley. The latter will receive the Outstanding Contribution To Music Award at the event.

The VO5 NME Awards 2017 will be hosted by BBC Radio 1 DJ Huw Stephens. Get your tickets and follow all the action over at NME.com/awards.

THE NOMINATIONS

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND
Supported by Austin
Tame Impala
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Green Day
Metallica
A Tribe Called Quest
Tegan And Sara

BEST NEW ARTIST
Supported by TOPMAN
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Zara Larsson
Sunflower Bean
Christine And The Queens
Dua Lipa
Anderson .Paak

For the full list of nominations go to awards.NME.com

PHOTOS: JOSEPH SINCLAIR, DEAN CHALKLEY, REX FEATURES

Last W33K IN NUMBERS

0
Spice Girls songs David Beckham chose for *Desert Island Discs*. Talk about an own goal.

4
Years since tweeting "F**k them and their farm", Wiley says he'll play Glastonbury 2017.

6
Albums Missy Elliott has in the vaults, which she refuses to release. In her own words: WTF?

82
Piers Morgan's tweets after Ewan McGregor's no-show on *Good Morning Britain*. U ok hun?

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ON THE RECORD

BIG OPINIONS. NO FILTER.

THIS WEEK

Turn it up! Why soul-shakingly loud gigs rule

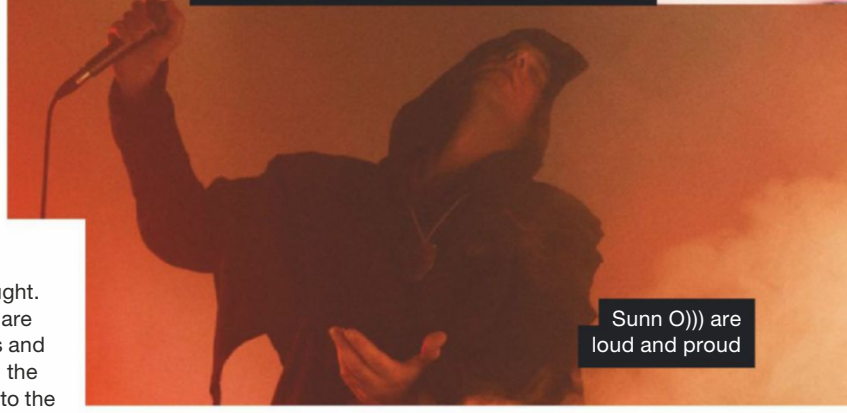
Sunn O))) are loud and proud

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

THE DRUMMER IN shoegaze legends and notoriously noisy f**kers My Bloody Valentine recently – and quaintly – wrote a letter to his local newspaper. Colm Ó Cíosóig reached out to *The Irish Times* and got into a right huff about a "new reality that is castrating culture". His issue was with his local mega-venue, Dublin's 3Arena, and what he saw as a reluctance there to pump up the volume, resulting in some gigs that were quieter than he'd have liked. Ó Cíosóig had seen Neil Young and Black Sabbath there and at both gigs heard only a mew when he'd expected a roar.

See, when it comes to all things loud, Ó Cíosóig knows his stuff. My Bloody Valentine have been around since the mid-1980s and in the business of stunning crowds with their towering fortress of sound ever since. When I saw them at All Tomorrow's Parties in 2009, they handed out earplugs before embarking on their brutal, soul-quaking onslaught. "When upfront at a gig you are supposed to feel the drums and bass rattle your bones, and the music should fill your head to the extent that it can bring you to an ecstatic place," wrote Ó Cíosóig.

As someone who's had some of the most powerful experiences of my life not far from a megalithic speaker stack, I'm inclined to agree. Often, *feeling* a gig can be just as powerful as watching it; the rumble in your head, the shuddering in your stomach, the small but real chance that you may throw up into your pint glass. It doesn't happen all the time, but when it does, it's an intoxicating, almost meditative thing.

Last year, I was blessed with an excellent selection of body-shaking shows, from stoner metallers Sleep, experimental rockers Swans and proto-grunge gods Melvins, who all turned it up to 11 and got me one step closer to enlightenment via volume. In the coming year, I'm expecting the same from drone 'n' doom dons Sunn O))) and rock icons Deep Purple – the band who once knocked three fans unconscious with sheer noisiness.

"Feeling a gig can be just as powerful as watching it"

Which brings us neatly to the not-unimportant matter of health and safety. I might be in love with loudness, but it's as dangerous as it is compelling. *The Guinness Book Of Records* no longer has a record for loudest band, thanks to fears of promoting damage to people's hearing. In fact, My Bloody Valentine have been victims of their own volume; guitarist and vocalist Bilinda Butcher once burst an eardrum and frontman Kevin Shields suffers from tinnitus, like roughly 10 per cent of the British public – Liam and Noel Gallagher included. Incurable and a massive pain in the arse, tinnitus should be avoided.

There's currently no government legislation about noise limits at gigs, but there will be warnings dotted around a venue if it's going to be a belter. So invest in some decent earplugs – you can still feel the decibels work their way through you with them in – and don't go to loud gigs *every* night of the week. Enjoy loudness in moderation and it'll make it even more special.

@leoniemaycooper

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£750 *stoneisland.co.uk*

Fortunate sons
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£13.99 *amazon.co.uk*

Going dotty
Converse goes for polka dot style in its latest sneaker line.
£69 *converse.com*

Mobile pics
Be different and hang up your fave photos on this copper display.
£15 *urbanoutfitters.com*

Sleeve style
From Basquiat to Banksy, *Art Record Covers* looks at amazing album covers.
£49.99 *taschen.com*

Badge of honour
Pay tribute to Nirvana's classic 'In Utero' artwork with this pin.
£6.79 *nerdpins.net*

Cosy camel
This camel coloured duffel coat is the perfect winter warmer.
£185 *frenchconnection.com*

Poster boy
Artist David Redon has reimagined Kendrick Lamar as a B-movie star.
£14 *bearty.co.uk*

Back in black
Get some gothic glam with this Victoriana-meets-*Fame*-style bodysuit.
£25 *missselfridge.com*

Fancy footwork
Red Wing's latest drop features these sweet suede shoes.
£239 *redwingheritage.eu*

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Mellow yellow
Pococello is a zesty limoncello that'll help banish memories of dry January.
£30 *harveynichols.com*

Lights on
Chinese paper lanterns become awesome earrings.
£35 *tattydevine.com*

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THIS WEEK

Stockton-on-Tees

"Check out The Georgian Theatre when it reopens"

‹ RYAN DEARLOVE
24, bar manager

Listening to:
KINGS OF LEON
Reverend
"I've seen them 17 times. I'm a big fan."

Wearing: Mish Mash shirt, Scotch & Soda jeans, New Balance trainers.
Best thing about Stockton-on-Tees: "Review Menswear is great if you're clothes shopping."

BETH MACDOUGALL ›
21, teacher

Listening to:
HOZIER
Arsonist's Lullabye
"I saw him in Belfast. He was awesome live."

Wearing: Zara jacket, Primark jumper, Urban Outfitters skirt, Kurt Geiger boots, Ralph Lauren bag.
Best thing about Stockton-on-Tees: "The Wasp's Nest is always good for cocktails."

‹ ADAM GILBERT
20, student

Listening to:
THE DOORS
Twentieth Century Fox
"I've only recently got into them. 'The Doors' is brilliant."

Wearing: Tokyo Laundry coat, Primark jeans.
Best thing about Stockton-on-Tees: "Check out The Georgian Theatre when it reopens in March."

PHOTOS: DAVID WALA

EMMA WRIGHT ›
31, store owner

Listening to:
RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
Otherside
"It's the ultimate feelgood song."

Wearing: Next top, UGG boots, Pandora jewellery.
Best thing about Stockton-on-Tees: "There's loads to do. It really is on the up."

Rags to riches

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PEROU

After years on the fringes of the UK hip-hop scene, Rory Graham – AKA Rag'n'Bone Man – has struck gold with his massive hit 'Human'. Hamish MacBain finds the Brighton bluesman adjusting to a new life in the spotlight

THE 'ELTON JOHN CALL' has, for a long time now, been as sure a sign as you can get that an up-and-coming singer is doing better than OK. And Rag'n'Bone Man – AKA Rory Graham – has just had his.

"It was an unknown number," he remembers. "And I don't like answering unknown numbers. But all the people I was with in my manager's office were like, 'Nah, answer it'. I answered and he's like, 'Dahhhling, it's Elton!' I just went, 'F**king hell.' He just goes, 'F**king love you, I think you're brilliant.' He'd just rung to say how good he thought I was and how he loved my material. It was great!"

The song that piqued Elton's attention – and a lot of other people's too – was, of course, 'Human', Graham's bluesy, smoky lead single from his forthcoming major label debut. It's one of those songs that has, for reasons that neither its creator nor anyone else can quite ascertain, taken on a life of its own. Intended as "a little ramp to the record", it's exploded out of all proportion since its July 2016 release: omnipresent and rising as far as Number Two in the Christmas chart, it was even performed on *The X Factor* by Emily Middlemas ("I thought she sang it quite well, to be honest," says Graham), after which Simon Cowell declared, "No one has heard this song, but it's going to be a huge hit."

Note to Cowell: 'Human' had been in the charts for a long time prior to his prediction. Not only that, but it had been doing unbelievably well all over the world – particularly in Europe, where it reached Number One in 10 countries. In Germany, it remained on top of the charts for over *three months*, making Graham one of the most recognisable British faces there right now.

Well. Sort of.

"We were in Hamburg," he smiles, beginning a story that he knows is a good one, "and the night before a show, one of the guys was like, 'We should go to the Christmas market on the Reeperbahn.' So we all went and it was f**king brilliant. I'd noticed people, like, looking at me a little bit more and I was like, 'Was this a good idea?' Then this one guy came up with his girlfriend. He said, 'Excuse me, but you look like Rory Graham.' I was like, 'Oh right, yeah.' He got a picture of me up on his phone and showed it to me. He was like, 'You look like him!' And I was like, 'Yeah, I do a bit, don't I?' then walked off and swiftly made my way out of there.

Nine things you probably didn't know about Rag'n' Bone Man

Because there's more to him than 'Human'

1 He's named after a British sitcom
Yep, it's *Steptoe And Son*, about a father-and-son rag-and-bone business.

2 He was once best known for being an MC
You used to find Rory Graham at illegal raves or on his Rag 'N' Bonez crew's own pirate radio station.

3 His tattoos are all related to music
The words 'Funk' and 'Soul' on his knuckles; The Blues Brothers on his arms.

4 A night at his local helped make him a star
Aged 21, his dad encouraged him to try an open mic night, and a stranger told him he should sing more.

5 His big break came after singing on the bog
His girlfriend sent promoters recordings of him practising covers in the loo, leading to a support slot with Joan Armatrading.

6 Bastille's producer helped shape his current sound
He teamed up with Mark Crew, who's worked on Bastille's two albums to date, in 2014.

"Then we had security going to the airport," he continues, "with people giving me high fives through security and stuff. I don't mind being recognised, as long as people are nice. I do like meeting people, it's just that some people are a bit disrespectful… Sometimes it's like, I'm having a roast dinner and someone's taking a picture of me. I don't mind taking pictures, but just ask, otherwise it's a bit weird. People are obsessed by pictures these days. They just want to say they met someone, have the evidence."

This is true, but the fact is Rory Graham is going to have to get used to many more fans claiming their piece of 'evidence' over the coming months. Following on from the runaway success of 'Human', he's been named the winner of the BRITs Critics' Choice Award (previous winners including… oh, you know), beating off competition from Anne-Marie and Dua Lipa. It came as a surprise to him. "When I was first nominated," he says, "I thought, 'Oh, they've just put me in there because they had to put someone in that's a bit more left-field.' I did convince myself that I wasn't going to win."

Graham says he doesn't really care about being famous. "In fact, I don't really want it. If I could erase that side of it, then that'd be cool, but… I think you can't concern yourself with the fame thing, or with what people say about you, because there's a lot of d**kheads in the world and unfortunately social media has given those d**kheads voices. I just block everybody now. I've got a bit of a temper and sometimes I'll just bite, so I've had to learn to be like, 'OK, instead of that I'll just f**king block you straightaway. I don't want to know your b*****ks'."

While his success may seem to have come overnight, it's the culmination of seven or eight years of hard work – and it has its roots in the UK's underground hip-hop scene.

Now 32, Rory Graham was born in Uckfield, a small town in East Sussex. From the age of about 16, he wanted to be a jungle DJ or MC and put on parties in his local area "just with mates and stuff. We'd put on a night in the local pub, then get kicked out." In 2008, he moved 18 miles up the road to Brighton and immersed himself in the then-vibrant hip-hop and open mic scene. "At the start it would kind of been more about freestyling," he says. "But then I started to sing over the beats. And then came a realisation that maybe I was alright at rapping, and people seemed to enjoy it, but when I sung it was a real difference. Just the reaction of people, I was like, 'I think I should do that, 'cause it feels better.'

He's being modest here. The voice that characterises Rag'n'Bone Man's music is truly a showstopper, sounding like it's emanating from someone who grew up in the Deep South of 1950s America rather than a rainy British seaside town. Surely he must have known it was something special? "Well, I realised it was in tune," he shrugs. "I realised it wasn't bad, but I didn't realise that it was distinctive or that there was anything particularly different about it. It was when old dudes would come up to me at jam nights and be like, 'I've been playing for 40 years and I have to say your voice is f**king incredible' and stuff like that. Then I'd be like, 'Well, if they're saying it, there must be some sort of truth to it.'"

Having found his voice, Rag'n'Bone Man initially struggled to fit into the scenes around him, so different was what he was doing. But quickly the UK hip-hop community, he says, "really embraced me. Everybody got on board and I gained a really cool fanbase through that. I was able to do festivals and bigger shows and stuff, even when I'd only put out a few little projects. It was pretty cool, really."

He self-released a couple of records, but soon "felt limited" by the constraints of both hip-hop and blues, and started looking for ways to develop his songwriting. Fortunately for him, he bumped into an old schoolfriend from Uckfield, Mark Crew, who'd been busy producing Bastille. Together, they developed the songs that would make up 2014's 'Wolves' EP. The resulting publishing deal allowed him to 'give up the day job' – he used to work as a carer for people with Asperger's and Down's syndromes – and ultimately started to attract the attention of major labels. "I was a little bit scared of all that at first," he notes, "'cause I didn't really have any knowledge of the music industry above ground. On a grassroots level, you do everything yourself and you have 100 per cent control. So it was like, if these big guys are interested in me, what do they want out of me?" He signed with Columbia, feeling they were happy with him the way he was, but he's still wary of other major labels. "They want to make you the next someone else," he continues. "And I've never heard that about myself, which is nice. It's never been 'You're the next such and such' because they can't figure it out. They can't fit me in a box, which is good. I'm not really box-sized, am I?"

The next step for Rag'n'Bone Man is to get the album out in the next couple of weeks. It's also called 'Human', but anyone expecting it to be just The Big Single and 10 more songs that are a lot like The Big Single will be disappointed. It's the opposite: a super-eclectic selection of songs, of which "50 per cent was written in the last year, and then stuff that I couldn't let go of. Like, there's a song from 'Wolves' called 'Life In Her Yet' which I wrote in, like, 2013. I didn't feel like enough people had heard it, so I felt it had a place on the album.

"There are really three parts to the album and there's, like, quite a lot of hip-hop on there. I guess it is a worry that people who love 'Human' might think they're buying the album and that's a blueprint for it, but it's definitely not. Hopefully they'll be pleasantly surprised."

He is, he notes, slightly daunted by the fact that he can't see a gap in his schedule until 2018. But Rory Graham is also lucky to have a great support network of people around him: from his girlfriend of eight years ("She doesn't ring me up and go, 'Oh, this is really hard.' She just gets on with it") to the crew that he used to – and when he can, still does – do shows with all over Brighton at all those open mic nights. He knows exactly what he wants to do, and who he is, and who he wants to be. And that's something that no troll can spoil for him – something that's much, much more important than any award that anyone can give him. NME

Catch Rag'n'Bone Man on tour

APRIL Tue 18
O2 Academy, Bristol
Wed 19 & Thu 20
O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London
Sat 22
Academy, Manchester
Sun 23
O2 ABC, Glasgow
Mon 24
O2 Academy, Birmingham
Wed 26
Rock City, Nottingham
MAY Sat 20
Dome, Brighton

"They can't fit me in a box, which is good. I'm not really box-sized, am I?"

7 He's a *Game Of Thrones* geek
Album track 'Skin' is all about (SPOILER) Jon Snow's lover being killed.
8 He spends his spare time rapping about *EastEnders*
Last November he tweeted about being up at 3am in an Amsterdam hotel, penning verses about Albert Square. As you do.
9 He's already teamed up with some big names
Vince Staples and Kate Tempest guested on 2014 EP 'Wolves'.

BUILDING A BRAND

A PIECE OF LEGO can take 432kg of weight – about five average Brits – before it starts to crack. That's why it hurts so much when you step on one barefoot: there's no give in the plastic, so the force of your weight zings straight back into your foot.

For 85 years, the Lego brand has proven similarly indestructible. Conventions across the globe cater to hundreds of thousands of fans who've taken their love of Lego beyond childhood to become AFOLs (Adult Fans Of Lego). Sales of Lego's videogame franchises, such as *Lego Star Wars*, now number more than 100 million globally. And three years ago, the Danish brand celebrated becoming the world's largest and most profitable toy company by releasing *The Lego Movie*. It was the UK box office's highest-grossing film of the year and there were shortages of the actual toy the following Christmas.

A spin-off, *The Lego Batman Movie,* swoops into cinemas next week, and director Chris McKay is totally upfront about its purpose. "It's ultimately a 90-minute toy commercial when you take a step back and look at it," he says. "But Lego's one of those brands that people don't have a negative feeling about."

McKay was a key member of the first *Lego Movie* team and knew that following the success of the satirical original, he'd have even more leeway for creativity with this spin-off. "Lego's an educational toy – it's artistic, funny-looking and kind of naïve," he explains, "so you can make a movie that has multiple layers. You're not just making a cynical movie advertising a product – you're making the only movie ever where Batman can actually confront his core problem: the hole in his heart." It's true: *The Lego Batman Movie* takes the 'anti' out of 'antihero'.

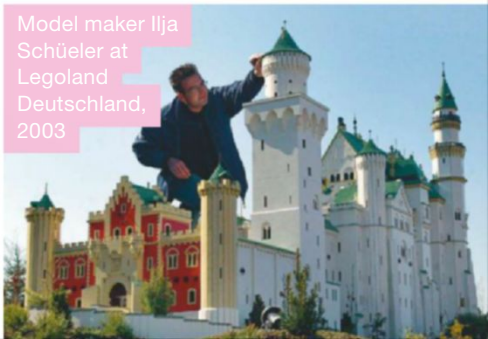
With its knowing references to almost every other on-screen iteration of Batman – Bale, Clooney, even KAPOW!-era Adam West – *The Lego Batman Movie* isn't just for kids, and nor is Lego. Plenty of famous adults are into the brick: David Beckham says, "It calms me down," Britney Spears calls it her "pastime pleasure" and when Ed Sheeran's debut album went gold, he bought a Death Star Lego set to celebrate. "It brings out a bit of your childhood," he's since explained, "which is important not to forget." Many an AFOL would agree.

In the last year, headlines about AFOL-made structures have encompassed a record-breaking 32-metre suspension bridge, a $15,000 statue of *Zootopia* fox Nick Wilde, and a series of 75 sculptures exhibited by American artist Nathan Sawaya.

"Lego represents both order and chaos"

Monthly clubs, such as London AFOLs, see grown-ups meeting over a communal stock of bricks for free builds and set building. Things are more competitive at conventions: Seattle's BrickCon lets AFOLs enter their creations into boat races and sumo battles, or compete in 'blind builds' and 'build in a bag' competitions. The latter sees them attempting to assemble sets inside their plastic wrapping as quickly as possible and yes, it's better viewing than the televised Rubik's Cube races of the '80s.

Lego is well aware of this passionate community, and in 2008 it launched a Kickstarter-style 'Lego Ideas' website: 10,000 up-votes mean a user's idea will be considered for production. To date,



Model maker Ilja Schüeler at Legoland Deutschland, 2003

AN AGE

As *The Lego Batman Movie* hits cinemas, Larry Bartleet looks at how the toy bricks conquered the world

success stories include new kits based on *Minecraft*, The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* and the NASA Mars Curiosity Rover – with working suspension – which was designed and suggested by a NASA mechanical engineer called Stephen Pakbaz. "If this is what it means to be a geek," he told 2014's *A Lego Brickumentary*, "I'm definitely OK with that because it's the most fun I've ever had."

Why is Lego's cross-generational appeal so strong? According to Jon Sutton, editor of *The Psychologist*, it's because it "represents both order and chaos. You can follow the instructions step by step, or you can go off-piste and create pretty much anything you can imagine." Sutton reckons the choice of Batman – "perhaps the most subversive character they could have picked" – is "the epitome" of that side of Lego.

The key weapon in The Lego Group's arsenal, though, is its squeaky clean reputation – and it's quick to maintain it. In November 2016 a Reading-based father called Bob Jones questioned a Lego promotion with the *Daily Mail* in a Facebook post that went viral. He recalls: "I had to say 'no' to my son when he looked at the front page of the *Daily Mail* and said, 'It says there's free Lego – can I get it?'" His Facebook post criticised the partnership with a paper whose headlines, he said, "do nothing but create distrust of foreigners, blame immigrants and are now having a go at top judges in the UK for being gay". Within days, Lego had ended the *Daily Mail* partnership "for the foreseeable future". Says a wry Jones: "...which can be read one of two ways".

Yet Lego remains undented and earlier this week was named the world's most powerful brand (above greats like Disney, Apple and Visa) by the global valuation consultancy Brand Finance. Its marketing and communications director Robert Haigh highlights gender neutrality, a long pedigree and customer loyalty as crucial factors in the ranking – but it's the company's new direction that's really making waves right now. Lego is repositioning itself as a "broader entertainment business", says Haigh, which means we can expect multiple feature-length films in the wake of September's *The Lego Ninjago Movie* and 2019's *The Lego Movie Sequel*. It means that Lego could conceivably be the new Pixar.

The big question, though, is whether Lego's ever-growing bubble might burst one day. "It could," Haigh concedes. "But the picture is certainly very rosy in the next few years." The bricks aren't going anywhere. Best watch your step.

***The Lego Batman Movie* is in cinemas Feb 10**

NME

Brick by brick

A brief history of Lego

1932 – 'Leg Godt' ('play well') is founded in Denmark

1958 – The Lego brick as we know it today is patented

1978 – The Lego mini figure is introduced

2004 – Shock – Lego announces a £144m annual loss

2005 – Legoland parks are sold; Lego returns to profit

2014 – *The Lego Movie* is the most profitable film of the year at the UK box office

PHOTOS: FABIO TAVARES, STEFAN SUSEMIHL, ALAMY

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

CABBAGE

RORY WYNNE

THU 16 MAR KEELE UNIVE[SOLD OUT] [illegible]LLROOM
FRI 17 MAR LIV[SOLD OUT] [illegible]LYMPIA
SAT 18 MAR[SOLD OUT] [illegible]N DOME
MON 20 MAR LINC[SOLD OUT] [illegible]NE SHED
TUE 21 MAR EXETER LEMON GROVE
THU 23 MAR LONDON ROUNDHOUSE
FRI 24 MAR BRIS[SOLD OUT] [illegible]ACADEMY
SAT 25 MAR CARDIFF[SOLD OUT] [illegible]ED
MON 27 MAR NORWICH THE NICK RAYNS LCR UEA
WED 29 MAR BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY
THU 30 MAR LEEDS C[SOLD OUT] [illegible]MY
FRI 31 MAR NEWCAS[SOLD OUT] [illegible]ACADEMY
SAT 01 APR GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY

NME.COM/TICKETS | GIGSANDTOURS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK

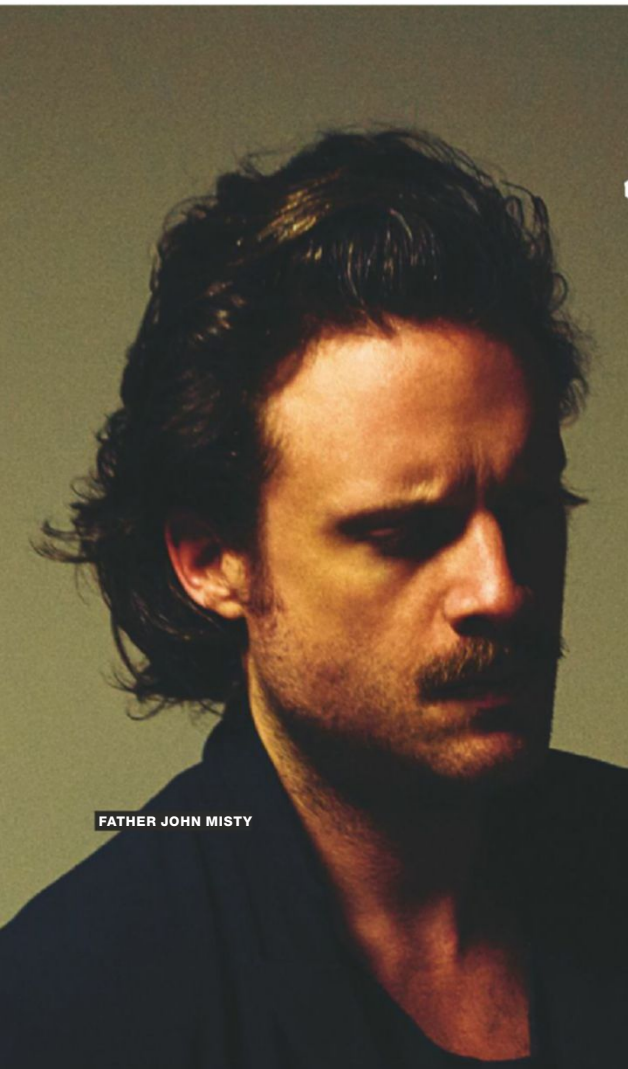
AN S.J.M. CONCERTS & DF PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 13 ARTISTS

PHOTO: JENN FIVE

VO5 Austin TOPMAN Nikon ZIG-ZAG PILOT Red Stripe hmv

RADAR

MUSIC, FILM, TV & MORE – THIS WEEK'S ESSENTIAL NEW RELEASES



FATHER JOHN MISTY

Best NEW tracks
And when to drop them

BEST FOR SETTING THE WORLD TO RIGHTS
FATHER JOHN MISTY
Pure Comedy
FJM swaps bants for philosophy in this epic piano-led ballad, which takes in everything from iron deficiency to self-sufficiency.

BEST FOR ROCKING OUT
CIRCA WAVES
Fire That Burns
The Liverpool guitar gang go in hard with this super-catchy new tune. If you like a belting chorus seek this out sharpish.

CIRCA WAVES

BEST FOR CRYING AT THE CLUB
MARTIN GARRIX AND DUA LIPA
Scared To Be Lonely
The 20-year-old Dutch DJ gets together with Dua Lipa for an emotive Calvin Harris/Rihanna-style downbeat EDM banger.

BEST FOR BEING A SPACE COWBOY
JAMIROQUAI
Automaton
Essentially The Supremes' 'You Keep Me Hangin' On' as re-recorded by robots, the return of Jay Kay is a strangely decent electro-funk treat.

BEST FOR FEELING FIERCE
MAJOR LAZER FEAT. PARTYNEXTDOOR & NICKI MINAJ
Run Up
Still the kings of the dancehall, Major Lazer enlist the fast-talking talents of Nicki Minaj to make this laid-back party tune soar.

BEST FOR BEING A BOSS
MISSY ELLIOTT FEAT. LAMB
I'm Better
The legend that is Missy strips back her sound for this spacious, seriously good tune about being very much in demand. *"He watches my body / Like he watches Scandal,"* she purrs. Brilliant.

FOR MORE NEW MUSIC, GO TO NME.COM

BEST FOR DREAMING OF SUMMER
ZARA LARSSON
So Good
With a languid guest spot from rapper Ty Dolla $ign, the Swedish pop star is decidedly sunny on this poolside-worthy R&B-inflected confection.

BEST FOR DISCO DANCING
BLONDIE
Fun
Debbie Harry and the New York legends are back with this Studio 54-worthy hit of sparkling dancefloor fuel, co-written by TV On The Radio's Dave Sitek.

BEST FOR MOODY MONDAYS
HVOB
The Blame Game
A doomy Austrian electro track seems a weird thing for Mumford & Sons' Winston Marshall to be lending his vocals and guitar-playing to, but this is 2017 – anything could happen.

BEST FOR BEING LOUD
CRYSTAL FAIRY
Chiseler
Noisy b*****ds Melvins join forces with Teri Gender Bender of Le Butcherettes for this fast and furious doom-punk offering.

PHOTOS: GUY LOWNDES, DE

Dark therapy

Sampha Sisay takes a break from helping out Drake, Solange and Frank Ocean to create a world all of his own

ALBUM OF THE WEEK

SAMPHA
Process
★★★★☆
R&B GRIEF DIGNIFIED

SAMPHA SISAY IS a huge talent. That's a fact acknowledged by Drake, Solange and Frank Ocean, all of whom have signed up the 27-year-old to help them with production and vocals over the past few years. In fact, the young man from Morden in south London has been so busy contributing to the groundbreaking R&B albums of others that he's been delayed in releasing his own.

Is 'Process' worth the three-and-a-half-year wait since his last EP? Yes – absolutely. It's a finely crafted and devastating take on the loss of his mother to cancer, as well as his inner turmoil at how success has dragged him away from his roots. The 'process' of the title refers to that of grieving as much as it does making music. Not that there's much distinction shown in these 10 therapeutic songs about love, remorse and ambition. '(No One Knows Me) Like The Piano' is the saddest of the lot – a stripped-back eulogy to his mother, played on a piano as beaten up and full of feeling as any Tom Waits ever sat down at.

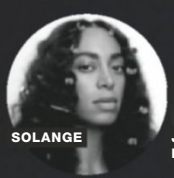
Elsewhere, there are plenty of masterful production touches. The timeless, lurching groove of 'Timmy's Prayer', for example, or the lush orchestration and crisp drum break of 'Blood On Me' – an emotional opus to rival Massive Attack's 'Unfinished Sympathy'. More often the music is subtle, however. It's simply an accompaniment to Sampha's main instrument: his voice. So that when he croons to his departed mother, "*In my chest you knew me best / You know I'll be back home*" on '…Like The Piano', there's not a heartstring that remains unplucked.

'Process' might not be as bold or as inventive or as life-changing as some of the other records Sampha's had a hand in during his career, but it does have a quiet, dignified impact that suits its maker. He hasn't stepped out of his shadowy, background world; instead, he's invited us to join him there. **Jonny Ensall**

PHOTOS: JAMIE-JAMES MEDINA

London's Sampha Sisay

FOR FANS OF


SOLANGE

JAMES BLAKE

Duvet day

Ever-reliable Mancunians serve up another album that's as warming as the morning's fourth whisky

ELBOW
Little Fictions
★★★★☆
ANTHEM ROMANCE WHISKY

IT'S UNFORTUNATE that the cover art for Elbow's seventh album reflects the cartoonish sci-fi aesthetic of 2016 video game *No Man's Sky*, a near-endless virtual universe of 18 quintillion planets that many gamers found to be a repetitive and dreary façade of stratospheric enormity. Some feel the same way about Elbow and, lacking any glorious unifying anthems like 'One Day Like This' and, um, all of Elbow's other glorious unifying anthems, they won't find anything to change their minds in 'Little Fictions'. A stylistic handbrake turn this is not; they're still Doves with narcolepsy.

There's much to love, though, for those who find Elbow's lethargic northern atmospherics as warm and comforting as the morning's fourth whisky. Marking a return to communal writing around an open fire in Scotland, 'Little Fictions' is a 13-tog duvet of a record, freed from Guy Garvey's relationship upheavals that informed 2014's 'The Take Off And Landing Of Everything' and his 2015 solo album 'Courting The Squall', and out to find some joy and romance in a darkening world.

It's there in the uplifting gospel and Afrobeat splashes, in the somnolent cowbell rave of 'Gentle Storm' and in the gorgeous Velvet Underground lollops of 'All Disco' and 'Kindling', both the sound of 'Venus In Furs' high on Radox. And it's there in first single 'Magnificent (She Says)', a stirring, string-swaddled vision of a young girl playing happily on a beach, a portrait of parental pride and childhood hope in the face of Hurricane Boris.

Not that 'Little Fictions' completely glosses over the terrors and challenges of 2017, like ramming a pillow over your ears at a Trump press conference. The electronic hula of 'K2' has Garvey sing-rapping about Britain's blind plunge towards an increasingly s**t-brown Brexit "*full of blood, snot and teeth and the glory of no one*". He attacks the partisan press and "*the villains at the tiller*" who "*gambled the farm on a headline*" and considers going to live in a caravan in the Andes. That this, and the routine desperation of a spluttering relationship described in a whirlwind of backward violins on the eight-minute title track, sound as reassuring as a slightly experimental shipping forecast will merely maintain Elbow's standing as the musical prescription tranquilliser you're either deeply addicted to or find too mild for your narcotic tastes.

If you're chasing the initial buzz, 'Little Fictions' is quite a hit. **Mark Beaumont**

LIKE THIS? TRY THIS!

BON IVER
22, A Million
Justin Vernon's third album cuts earnest folk with mad symbolism, numerology and experimental production.

PHOTO: ANDY WHITTON

(L-r:) Pete Turner, Mark Potter, Craig Potter, Guy Garvey

Soul survivor

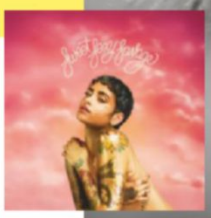
TV talent show exile whose R&B pop has a dark underbelly

KEHLANI

SweetSexySavage

★★★★☆

R&B HONESTY SELF-LOVE



ALTHOUGH KEHLANI Parrish began her career as a member of PopLyfe, a teen band who finished fourth on *America's Got Talent*, she's no cookie-cutter R&B queen. "*Everything I do / I do with passion,*" this tattooed rising star sings on 'CRZY'. "*If I gotta be a b***h / I'm-a be a bad one*."

The 21-year-old from Oakland in California clearly has attitude, but it's her honesty that makes 'SweetSexySavage' such a compelling debut album. Last March, it was reported that Kehlani had been hospitalised following an apparent suicide attempt, and 'Piece Of Mind' could be read as a song about hitting reset. "*Trying to forget all the unnecessary thoughts from my head / Man, it was pretty scary*," she sings over deceptively breezy beats.

Elsewhere, she recalls her tough upbringing on 'Not Used To It' and warns a would-be lover on 'Do U Dirty' that the "*hood in me*" beats the "*good in me*". 'SweetSexySavage' also contains intriguing relationship songs. The Akon-sampling trap-pop jam 'Undercover' is about keeping a love affair secret, while standout ballad 'Advice' deals with a crushing realisation, "*How is the man of my dreams not a man of his word?*" Kehlani says she's attracted to both genders and wrote 'Distraction', a sleek R&B come-on, about a woman she fancied but didn't want anything serious with.

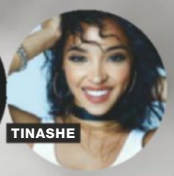
Set off by her distinctive voice, sweet but tough like honeycomb, the album is cohesive without feeling too samey. She channels TLC on the folky R&B ballad 'Escape', rides an early-Rihanna bounce on 'Get Like', and pulls off a darker hip-hop vibe on 'Not Used To It'. The album ends with a gospel-tinged ballad called 'Thank You', on which Kehlani sings about her "*growth*". Given her rough 2016, it's easy to forgive this one moment of well-meaning cheesiness.

Kehlani's 17-track debut album establishes her as a multi-faceted talent, but it's a bit too long. Less interesting songs like 'In My Feelings' and 'Hold Me By The Heart' should probably have been chopped, but they don't prevent her from making a great first impression. When she sings, "*Ain't nothin 'bout me basic*," on 'CRZY', it's hard to disagree.

Nick Levine

FOR FANS OF

ZAYN



TINASHE

FILM

Mr Doubtfire

An award-winning, offbeat German comedy – complete with freaky sex scene and a huge heart

TONI ERDMANN
15 *Peter Simonischek, Sandra Hüller, Michael Wittenborn*

★★★★☆

SURREAL | SADNESS | FAKE TEETH

IF THERE'S A THIN LINE between comedy and sadness, this subtitled film from German director Maren Ade inches along it with cool self-confidence. *Toni Erdmann* is a strange, sometimes hilarious and ultimately very moving comedy-drama that deservedly won the top prize at last year's European Film Awards.

After early scenes introducing us to his unusual sense of humour, we follow prank-loving German piano teacher Winfried (Peter Simonischek) to Bucharest, where he plans to surprise his high-flying daughter Ines (Sandra Hüller). Unfortunately, she's horribly distracted with wooing a potential new client called Henneberg (Michael Wittenborn), so any father-daughter bonding takes a backseat.

Winfried seemingly leaves Bucharest feeling dejected and concerned for his overworked and isolated daughter, who appears to be prone to depression. Yet a couple of days later, he reappears unexpectedly while Ines is dining at a fancy restaurant with friends, having disguised himself with a tatty wig and some terrible false teeth.

At this point, Ade's film becomes increasingly surreal. Presenting himself as "Toni Erdmann", Henneberg's eccentric supposed life coach, Winfried keeps inserting himself into Ines' personal and professional interactions. Her responses to his clumsy intrusions are exquisitely written and beautifully performed.

Desperate not to embarrass herself by revealing Toni's true identity, Ines is clearly exasperated, but she's too kind and perhaps too scared to tell her father to drop the act. At times, she's even amused by his silly but well-meaning antics. A scene in which Toni corners Ines into belting out Whitney Houston's 'The Greatest Love Of All' for a room of strangers is a masterclass in social awkwardness.

Toni Erdmann isn't self-indulgent, but it definitely feels long. Its offbeat comedy unfolds over 162 minutes, which includes an extended sequence set at an awkward naked party and an even freakier sex scene that almost feels like something from a Hollywood gross-out movie. But even in its weirdest interludes, Ade's film never loses focus. At its heart, *Toni Erdmann* is a touching exploration of the way parental love can be comforting even when we think we don't need it. **Nick Levine**

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Director Maren Ade shot 120 hours of footage and spent over a year editing the film into its final cut.

PHOTOS: DAVID CAMARENA

Want to see *John Wick: Chapter Two* first?

JOHN WICK BECAME AN immediate action classic when it was released in 2015. With Keanu Reeves playing a retired hitman who picks up his guns once more to avenge the killing of the only thing he loved – his dog – it was filled with thrilling gunfights, detestable villains and cracking one-liners. Now the man, the myth, the legend is back for *John Wick: Chapter Two*.

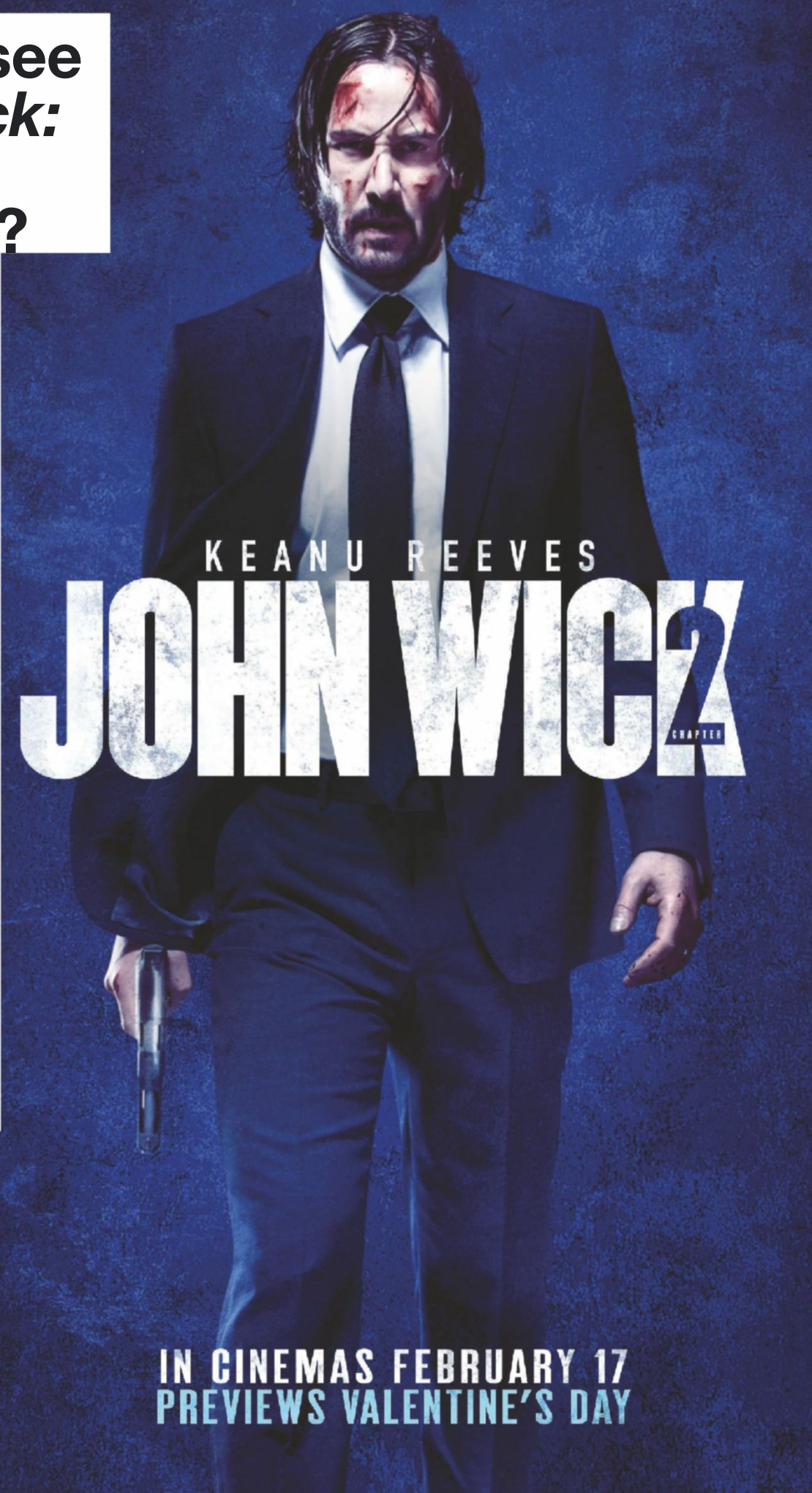
One of the most anticipated sequels of the year, *John Wick: Chapter Two* transports John to Rome, where he has to use all his skills to assist a former associate who's attempting to take control of a mysterious international assassins guild. John will face his deadliest enemies yet as he aids his old cohort. Expect even more exciting examples of 'gun-fu' – that's part-gunfight, part-martial art – than we saw in the first movie.

Joining Keanu Reeves in the new movie are his old *Matrix* co-star Laurence Fishburne, Academy Award winner Common and Ruby Rose (*Orange Is The New Black*). Ian McShane also returns as the scene-stealing Winston. *John Wick: Chapter Two* is a bigger, slicker, even more adrenalised sequel in which only one thing is certain: not everyone will make it out alive.

Can't wait to see it? Good news: you could nab a place at a special preview screening ahead of its release on Feb 17.

How do I claim tickets?

John Wick: Chapter Two blasts into cinemas on Feb 17, but lucky *NME* readers have the chance to see it first and for free at special preview screenings across the country on Feb 10 (London only) and Feb 16. To claim free preview tickets, visit showfilmfirst.com and enter the code **690095** for London, or **325920** for Glasgow and Birmingham.



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TV

What maketh a mutant?

He's the latest Marvel superhero to get his own TV series, but who is Legion and how does he stack up against his fellow capes?

LEGION

FOX, 9pm, February 9

Dan Stevens, Rachel Keller

MARVEL COMICS MUTANTS

Dan Stevens as David Haller/Legion

THE USP

In the comics, Legion is a mutant whose powers also include all the symptoms of schizophrenia and dissociative identity disorder – the difference being that he also has all the strengths and abilities of his additional personalities. This internal struggle plays havoc with the man's mind and Legion's sanity – or lack thereof – is a major theme in the series. In this respect, his nearest mutant neighbour is probably the fourth-wall-breaking Deadpool, who operates on a different plane of reality to the world around him.

SEXINESS

Marvel Comics' big and small screen adaptations aren't exactly famed for the unattractiveness of their cast – sometimes there'll be a group of people onscreen where Chris Hemsworth (y'know, Thor) is, like, the third best-looking. Insanity. Dan Stevens (who plays Legion) is more in the 'James McAvoy as Charles Xavier/Professor X' camp than the 'Hugh Jackman as Wolverine' one, in that he looks like a handsome dude rather than a demigod carved out of God's own bicep – but come on, he's not doing badly. He's about to be the Beast to Emma Watson's Belle in the live-action *Beauty And The Beast* movie, and models for Armani in his spare time.

ABSURDITY

Fargo showrunner Noah Hawley is in charge of *Legion* and he's brought a hallucinatory, beautifully shot ridiculousness to it, with Bollywood-esque song and dance sequences, and tables being overturned in bullet time. It's appropriate for the character, whose multiple personalities include pirates, dinosaurs, centaurs and all kinds of preposterousness. If you think Legion sounds like a silly character, though, dig through Marvel's archives and you'll find plenty where that came from, including Bird-Brain, Doorman and The Hypno-Hustler.

POWER

Legion is one of the most powerful mutants in the universe and, pleasingly, can be described as such (due to boring licensing issues between Marvel and 20th Century Fox, the word 'mutant' isn't used in any of the Marvel Cinematic Universe or Marvel's TV shows – only the X-Men films and now *Legion*). He's the secret son of Professor X and the manifold nature of his powers means that, cumulatively, he could wallop any other X-Person. It's the bigger ones, the otherworldly things, the Thanoses and Galactuses of the galaxy, who could put up more of a fight.

ER, MANY-NESS (?)

Legion gets his name from sort of being loads of people – it's a Bible reference, from a demon telling Jesus, "My name is Legion, for we are many." The Marvel character with the next best claim to being loads of people is Spider-Man, due to his involvement in *The Clone Saga* in the comics (and being played by three different actors in 10 years in the films). *The Clone Saga* was a long-running event in which it was revealed (but later shown to be a lie) that the Spider-Man we all knew and loved was just one of loads of Spider-clones, some of whom had weird things going on, like eight limbs. It was, um, crap though, while *Legion* looks anything but, so there's that.

WORDS: MIKE RAMPTON

Under the RADAR

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST

Billie Marten

Teenager writing dark, smart songs

BILLIE MARTEN IS JUST like every other A-level student with a job on the side. But balancing coursework and earning a few quid in the local Italian is one thing; very few of us had to juggle school with touring an album.

Marten, named on the BBC Music Sound Of 2016 list, released her subtly experimental, quietly stunning debut 'Writing Of Blues And Yellows' back in September. While she may not mention it to mates — "I never, ever talk about my music in school" — it's a record worth shouting about, giving nods to Laura Marling, SOAK and '70s singer-songwriter Nick Drake.

Right now the teenager is less worried about ticket sales, more hoping she can keep up with English, French and Art while on the road, with a UK tour under her belt and US shows plotted for later this year.

Despite only being 17, she's already something of a veteran. Things got going from an unlikely source: her mum uploaded videos of Marten singing covers to YouTube to show to her grandparents in France. A couple of years later, she recorded a session for a local TV station and has been writing ever since. She flippantly says the songs on her debut are either awful ones she wrote years ago or "crap" she penned at the last minute to "shove on there" and fill the gaps.

"Don't get me wrong, a lot of time and tears went into [the album]," she says. "But it isn't perfection. If I was waiting for that, it would never have come out. I'm just aware of my weaknesses and want to carry on so I can make another one, and another one. I just know I need to stay true to what I want to do and not fit in with other people's perceptions."

Marten's songwriting is sophisticated beyond her years — '…Blues And Yellows' is filled with candid self-analysis and references to mental health. "I have a lot of fake characters I like to bring out in certain situations, as we all do. No one would describe me as the happiest person in the world, but I'm not a misery. I'm just… there. Sad songs are the ones I connect with best."

If Marten sounds as if she doesn't quite understand her appeal, plenty of others do – video views total close to two million. "I guess those numbers do mean something," she says. "But not to me. It's not like I check them every day. It's mad that so many people I don't know listen to my music." **Andy Welch**

PHOTOS: MARK SHERWOOD, REX FEATURES

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Marten's widely reported love of alpacas is starting to wear her down: "I do love them but I wish I'd never mentioned the things now."

Best track

EMILY

Musically delicate and fragile, but lyrically steely and determined.

FOR FANS OF

"It's mad – people I don't know listen to my music"

THE WAREHOUSE PROJECT PRESENTS...
PARKLIFE
10TH-11TH JUNE 2017
HEATON PARK Manchester
THE 1975
FRANK OCEAN
BOY BETTER KNOW
A TRIBE CALLED QUEST
JESS GLYNNE
TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB
FATBOY SLIM
DAMIAN 'JR GONG' MARLEY
LONDON GRAMMAR
FLYING LOTUS
GEORGE EZRA
CHAKA KHAN
CARL COX
ERIC PRYDZ
ANDY C
DJ EZ
ABOVE & BEYOND
JAMIE JONES
SETH TROXLER
THE MARTINEZ BROTHERS
RAG'N'BONE MAN
ANDERSON .PAAK & THE FREE NATIONALS
ZARA LARSSON
LITTLE DRAGON
WILEY
SAMPHA
GIGGS
MURA MASA
ELROW PRESENTS FAR WEST
DANNY BROWN
ADAM BEYER
JOSEPH CAPRIATI
DIXON
OLIVER HELDENS
HANNAH WANTS
MAYA JANE COLES
DUSKY
JORIS VOORN
DAVID RODIGAN
HOT SINCE 82
JACKMASTER
KÖLSCH
BICEP
PATRICK TOPPING
PETE TONG
SKREAM
ARMAND VAN HELDEN
FLOATING POINTS SOLO LIVE SET
JON HOPKINS DJ
JAGWAR MA
RATBOY
NAO
LOYLE CARNER
TOM MISCH LIVE
LEVELZ
MOODYMANN
THE BLACK MADONNA
FATIMA YAMAHA
GOLDIE INFLUENCES
YOUSEF
RICHY AHMED
WILKINSON DJ
NOISIA DJ
TODDLA T & COCO
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GERD JANSON
MIDLAND
HUNEE
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REJJIE SNOW
J HUS
CRAZY P LIVE
AJ TRACEY
WAZE & ODYSSEY
ARTWORK
MONKI
HYPE & HAZARD
MY NU LENG
P MONEY
MICK JENKINS
JOE GODDARD LIVE
ALEXIS TAYLOR HOT CHIP PRINCE TRIBUTE
DENIS SULTA
JASPER JAMES
PREDITAH
CABBAGE
RAYE
JAPANESE HOUSE
CONGO NATTY
HORSE MEAT DISCO
ROMARE LIVE
DJ CRAZE
NASTIA
NADIA ROSE
STEFFLON DON
MOXIE
NIGHTMARES ON WAX
NORMAN JAY MBE
THE HEATWAVE
BONZAI
MELE
DUB PHIZIX & STRATEGY
WILLIAM DJOKO
DEKMANTEL SOUND SYSTEM
HAMMER
REX ORANGE COUNTY
DE LA SWING
MARC MAYA
KRYSTAL KLEAR
KLOSE ONE
MAX CHAPMAN
JACKY
THEO KOTTIS
FAKEAR
LAUREN LO SUNG
CONDUCTA
JAMZ SUPERNOVA
PRESIDENT T
ABRA CADABRA
GEORGE PRIVATTI
ELLIE COCKS
ELLIOT ADAMSON
NORTH BASE
VENUM SOUND
RICH REASON
KRYSKO
GREG LORD
PIRATE COPY
JONNY DUB
WILL TRAMP
ZUTKEH DJS
PETE ZORBA
JAMES ORGAN
HACKETT
NICOLA BEAR
NOW WAVE DJS
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live

THIS WEEK'S BEST TICKETS AND GIGS

All the people

Parklife Festival is bringing Frank Ocean and The 1975 to Manchester's Heaton Park this summer

UNTIL LAST WEEK, IT looked like Frank Ocean's only UK date in 2017 would be London's Lovebox in July. But Manchester's Parklife Festival has just pipped them to the post by announcing the reclusive superstar as one of its headliners in June. It'll be the first time in four years that the cult R&B star has played in the UK.

Last time Frank was here, he was touring his debut album, 2012's lauded 'Channel Orange', but this time round he'll have three albums of material to choose from. In August last year, he made good on four years of hype by releasing two albums in one go: an overlooked visual album called 'Endless' and the real deal, 'Blonde', which went to Number One in the UK, the USA and several other countries around the world. Ocean hasn't played live since 2014, so it remains a mystery how he'll adapt these two introspective, meandering new albums for festivals, but one thing's for sure: he'll be attracting huge crowds.

Also drawing big audiences will be the festival's other headliners, The 1975. These local boys dominated last year's festival circuit with their overblown, beautifully staged and funny sets, which were mostly made up of songs from their overblown, beautiful and funny album 'I Like It When You Sleep, For You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware Of It'.

Elsewhere, festivalgoers can look forward to sets from Skepta's crew Boy Better Know, Californian R&B man Anderson .Paak, Swedish pop star Zara Larsson and the pop-leaning indie trio Two Door Cinema Club.

FESTIVAL

PARKLIFE FESTIVAL

ON SALE NOW

JUNE Sat 10 & Sun 11
Heaton Park, Manchester

LINEUP: Frank Ocean, The 1975, Boy Better Know, Anderson .Paak, Zara Larsson, London Grammar, Two Door Cinema Club
TICKETS: Weekend tickets £95, day tickets £59.50

Frank Ocean on stage at All Tomorrow's Parties festival in New York

PHOTO: GETTY

Future Islands are hitting the road in April

DREAM WIFE

London-based riot grrrl advocates

APRIL
Thu 27 Tufnell Park Dome, London

TELL ME MORE: The trio are also supporting Sleigh Bells on their UK tour in February.
TICKETS: £8.80

ELBOW

Misty-eyed alt-rock veterans

JUNE
Thu 15 Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury
Sat 17 Bedgebury Pinetum, Tunbridge Wells
Sat 24 Dalby Forest, Pickering
Sun 25 Sherwood Pines, Nottingham
Thu 29 Thetford Forest, Brandon
Fri 30 Delamere Forest, Northwich
JULY
Fri 7 Cannock Chase Forest, Rugeley

TELL ME MORE: Elbow will emphasise the earthy aspect of their music with these gigs in forests. Expect 'One Day Like This' to sound amazing.
TICKETS: £41.50

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METHYL ETHEL

Australian psych lot

MARCH
Wed 1 Oslo, London
Thu 2 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
Fri 3 King Tut's, Glasgow
Sat 4 Deaf Institute, Manchester
Sun 5 Bodega, Nottingham
Tue 7 Green Door Store, Brighton

TELL ME MORE: Like Tame Impala, Methyl Ethel are from Perth, and they've supported Courtney Barnett in the past. They deserve a warm welcome.
TICKETS: £7.70-£11

THE MACCABEES

Indie heroes on their final tour

JUNE
Tue 27 & Wed 28 O2 Apollo, Manchester
Thu 29, Fri 30 & Sat 1 (July) Alexandra Palace, London

TELL ME MORE: This is one last chance to bid farewell to south London's brilliant quintet. They're being supported by fellow indie stalwarts Mystery Jets. No tears, now.
TICKETS: £28.50-£38.50

FUTURE ISLANDS

Diaphragm-straining synthpop crew

APRIL
Thu 27 Barrowland, Glasgow
Fri 28 Stylus, Leeds
Sat 29 O2 Academy, Liverpool
Sun 30 Dome, Brighton
MAY
Tue 2 Rock City, Nottingham
Wed 3 O2 Academy, Bristol

TELL ME MORE: You'll know frontman Samuel T Herring for his guttural yelps and his mad dancing. Both are excellent.
TICKETS: £24.75-£25.76

THE WEEK'S BEST GIGS

MENACE BEACH

AJ TRACEY
Fri 3 Gorilla, Manchester
Sat 4 Studio 24, Edinburgh
Thu 9 O2 Academy, Oxford

ANNA MEREDITH
Sat 4 CCA, Glasgow

ANTHRAX
Thu 9 O2 Institute, Birmingham

BIG THIEF
Fri 3 The Louisiana, Bristol
Sat 4 The Leadmill, Sheffield
Sun 5 The Mash House, Edinburgh
Mon 6 Crescent WMC, York
Tue 7 Soup Kitchen, Manchester
Wed 8 Spanky Van Dyke's, Nottingham
Thu 9 The Lexington, London

BLACK PEAKS
Fri 3 Moles, Bath
Sat 4 The Firebug, Leicester
Sun 5 O2 Academy, Birmingham

BLOC PARTY
Wed 8 Albert Hall, Manchester

BOXED IN
Fri 3 Broadcast, Glasgow
Sat 4 Electric Circus, Edinburgh
Mon 6 Belgrave Music Hall, Leeds
Tue 7 The Buyers Club, Liverpool
Wed 8 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Thu 9 The Deaf Institute, Manchester

RAYE

C DUNCAN
Fri 3 The Wardrobe, Leeds
Sat 4 Bodega, Nottingham

CONOR OBERST
Fri 3 The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

DEERHOOF
Mon 6 Village Underground, London

DRAKE
Sat 4 & Sun 5 The O2, London
Wed 8 & Thu 9 First Direct Arena, Leeds

DUSKY
Sat 4 Mandela Hall, Belfast
Thu 9 Phoenix, Exeter

DVSN
Fri 3 KOKO, London

ESTRONS
Wed 8 The Harley, Sheffield
Thu 9 The Boston Music Room, London

THE FALL
Fri 3 Tramshed, Cardiff

GREEN DAY
Sun 5 First Direct Arena, Leeds
Mon 6 Arena, Manchester
Wed 8 The O2, London

HANNAH WANTS
Sat 4 Electric Brixton, London

HIDDEN CHARMS
Sat 4 The Louisiana, Bristol
Wed 8 The Magnet, Liverpool
Thu 9 Think Tank?, Newcastle

INHEAVEN
Wed 8 The Engine Shed, Lincoln
Thu 9 Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

KALEO
Fri 3 Albert Hall, Manchester
Sat 4 O2 Institute, Birmingham

FOR MORE LIVE MUSIC, GO TO NME.COM

KATE NASH
Mon 6 Oran Mor, Glasgow
Tue 7 Gorilla, Manchester
Wed 8 University Union, Leeds
Thu 9 Leadmill, Sheffield

LADYHAWKE
Tue 7 The Marble Factory, Bristol
Thu 9 The Art School, Glasgow

LITTLE COMETS
Thu 9 O2 Academy, Oxford

LOYLE CARNER
Fri 3 The Garage, Glasgow
Sat 4 Liquid Room, Edinburgh
Sun 5 Riverside, Newcastle
Tue 7 O2 Academy, Oxford
Wed 8 Belgrave Music Hall, Leeds
Thu 9 Academy, Manchester

MATTHEW AND THE ATLAS
Fri 3 Soup Kitchen, Manchester
Sat 4 Parr Street Studios, Liverpool
Mon 6 Broadcast, Glasgow
Tue 7 The Mash House, Edinburgh

MENACE BEACH
Fri 3 Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff
Sat 4 The Joiners, Southampton
Mon 6 The Bullingdon, Oxford
Tue 7 The Hope & Ruin, Brighton
Wed 8 Moth Club, London
Thu 9 The Portland Arms, Cambridge

PLAZA
Tue 7 Fallow, Manchester

RAYE
Thu 9 XOYO, London

SAINT MOTEL
Tue 7 King Tut's, Glasgow
Wed 8 The Deaf Institute, Manchester
Thu 9 Scala, London

SHAUN RYDER
Thu 9 Library Theatre, Darwen

SKREAM
Sat 4 Patterns, Brighton

TOM GRENNAN
Mon 6 Gullivers, Manchester
Tue 7 The Cookie, Leicester
Wed 8 Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
Thu 9 Bush Hall, London

TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB
Fri 3 & Sat 4 Barrowland, Glasgow
Mon 6 O2 Guildhall, Southampton
Tue 7 O2 Academy, Bristol
Thu 9 Alexandra Palace, London

WAKA FLOCKA FLAME
Wed 8 O2 Academy Islington, London

WILEY
Sun 5 University SU, Cardiff
Thu 9 The Roundhouse, London

YUNGEN
Tue 7 The Arch, Brighton

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES

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05 LEEDS FIRST DIRECT ARENA
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09 NEWCASTLE METRO RADIO ARENA
11 GLASGOW THE SSE HYDRO
12 ABERDEEN GE OIL & GAS ARENA
14 MANCHESTER ARENA
15 LIVERPOOL ECHO ARENA
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THE ROYAL PARKS

Soundtrack of my life

Chris Ramsey

Funny guy, from the telly

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING

DEACON BLUE

Real Gone Kid

"My mam always had the radio on when I was a kid, so '80s music is just in my soul. I was two years old, I could barely string a sentence together and a song was on the radio. My mam and dad were going, 'Who sings this?' Out of nowhere, two-year-old me in the back of the car said, 'Deacon Blue, Real Gone Kid.' They looked at us like, 'What the hell?!'"

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO

2PAC

Ghetto Gospel

"I was on a lads' holiday with me mates when I was 16 in Magaluf and it came on by the pool twice in a row. Then I went up to me room and the room to the right played it. Then it finished and then the room to the left played it and then the room across the corridor played it."

2PAC

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH

RICK ASTLEY

Never Gonna Give You Up

"It's gonna be something rubbish… I absolutely loved Rick Astley. I didn't buy it, my mum and dad had it, but I used to walk around with a Rick Astley tape and make them put it on all the time. I just thought he was great."

THE FIRST GIG I WENT TO

ARCTIC MONKEYS

The Red Rooms, Newcastle

"It was £2 a ticket. It was when they still had the husky lad as the bassist, Andy. I got him and Alex Turner to sign my shirt. I was, like, proper fangirling over them. I got the Metro home and I remember being so buzzing that I went in my mam's room and told her how amazing it was."

THE FIRST ALBUM I BOUGHT

PJ & DUNCAN

Psyche

"Just to be a northern stereotype it was the first album by PJ & Duncan [Ant & Dec], 'Psyche'. 'Let's Get Ready To Rhumble' was my favourite song, obviously. And they taught us about paintball safety on Byker Grove, too."

GO TO NME.COM FOR MORE SOUNDTRACKS

MICHAEL KIWANUKA

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF HOME

MICHAEL KIWANUKA

Bones

"I danced to it at my wedding. I did a Children in Need gig at a theatre in Soho and he was on too. He was a lovely lad, dead quiet, dead nice. I stood beside the stage and he absolutely took my breath away with his voice. It was the deepest sort of silky smooth, velvety voice. He nearly knocked me off me feet."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME DANCE

BILLY JOEL

We Didn't Start The Fire

"There isn't actually a dance to it. You just march on the spot and you point when somebody says something. Also 'St Elmo's Fire (Man In Motion)' by John Parr, but I don't want to dance; I just want to stand up and point with both hands in the air."

MY WARM-UP TRACK

DAN LE SAC VS SCROOBIUS PIP

Letter From God To Man

"I listen to something with a lot of lyrics that I know, so I can rap along and get my mouth moving so I can speak when I go on stage."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

JOHN PARR

St Elmo's Fire (Man In Motion)

"I want everyone to be like, 'That was epic.' So you know what, 'St Elmo's Fire' again. There'd be a cannon on each corner of the coffin."

The *Chris Ramsey Show* is on Comedy Central UK at 10pm on Wednesdays

LAST WORD

The wisdom of the *NME* archives

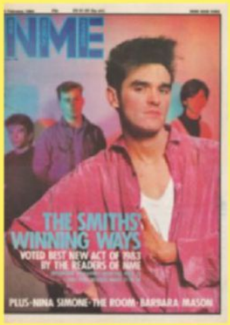
THIS WEEK

MORRISSEY

The Smiths

February 4, 1984

"I don't think I'll wilt quickly. We'll never be flavour of the month. I think we're just a little bit too clever for that."



INTERVIEW: LEONIE COOPER. PHOTOS: PHIL SHARP, REX FEATURES

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Wed 26th April / LONDON O_2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON

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DD ALLEN | SIRPICO | ENDEA | TOWERS | JAWBONE

MON 6TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY BRISTOL
SYREN CITY | THE BELISHAS | IDESTROY | THE MARKS CARTEL
CONSTANCE | COSMIC NINJA

TUE 7TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY OXFORD
A WAY WITH WORDS | PEERLESS PIRATES | BIGG | WHO'S ALICE
THE AUTUMN SAINTS | GARDEN

THU 9TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ABC GLASGOW
BLACK CAT BONE | SCHNARFF SCHNARFF | THE VIOLET KIND | THULA BORAH
THE BAR DOGS | PANIC ANCHOR | REAL LIFE ENTERTAINMENT

SAT 11TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY SHEFFIELD
GRACES | SOBRIQUET | HOME WRECKED
STEEL TREES | THE BLEWES | FEMUR | THE VELCRO TEDDY BEARS

SUN 12TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY LIVERPOOL
MEET THE ROBOTS | RIVAL BONES
THE PROTAGONISTS | MAD ALICE | BIG BAMBORA

MON 13TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY BIRMINGHAM
MR GEORGE'S FAMOUS LAST WORDS | THE BORGIAS | BIG GINGER KID
CHARLES DEXTER WARD AND THE IMAGINEERS | SPEAKING IN SHADOWS

TUE 14TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY LEICESTER
JITTERZ | GO PRIMITIVE | THE BRANDY THIEVES
STUPID BOOTS | ROYAL ARCADE | THE JANGLES | FLIP LIKE WILSON

WED 15TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY NEWCASTLE
EDENTHORN | BETTER DAYS | ENVERSA
DIGITS | HIVEMIND | CACTUSMAN | MANY MOONS

THU 16TH MARCH 2017 - O_2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON · LONDON
FINDING KATE | DEAD MAN'S WHISKEY | BARE HUNTER
FUZZWALKER | TOFFEES | CACKLE

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